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Spirituality & Self-Care

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IMPACT

Like many other times, while matriculating through my studies at Nyack/Alliance University, there were seasons where God would use coursed/course study material to reveal, confirm, and work on me personally. My first two years is where God revealed my purpose for going into social work and begin to build my vision. In those years I learned that my passion for helping people was related to my God given purpose, gifts, and talents. In the years that followed, God began to work in me as well. This was the hardest thing to go through, but the most necessary to get to the place that God has purposed. He showed me who I was and the work that needed to be done so that I can be healed and whole.

One specific book I remember reading was called “Real Change is Possible if You’re Willing to Start from The Inside Out”, now I read this book while in a psychology class and when I received the reading material for the class, I remembered thinking. “What does this have to do with this class?” I’m still not sure but this book spoke to my life at that time, it spoke of being authentically you, the you that God can change if you surrender to Him. Not the pretend you that looks good for everyone else. For me this caused me to look into the dark places within

me that only I and God knew about and to call it out, repent, and began a change. It caused total surrender to God.

There were a few other experiences as well and just like then, this year was no different, in the regard that God again used study and course material to speak to the things taking place in my life to evoke change my life. Having gone through the very traumatic experience of death, I began to suffer from server stress, anxiety, and depression, and one acerbated the other making it worse. Although I had God, therapy, and my willingness to beat this and upon starting school, had already began the process of healing, this course gave me additional tools to apply and further my healing. My spiritual journey was also impacted by the reading. Just as other times before God shows up and do what He does best, be God. Crafting a rule of Life: An invitation to the well-ordered way, helped me with refining my rule of life, goals, talents, purpose, vision, and mission. A place where I am currently seeking God.

Dealing with stress

During this course the study material “Self-Care in Social Work” was an additional tool on my journey to healing from anxiety and depression. Its impact was profound because I am actively in the midst of a crisis. As I mentioned previously, learning and understanding my stressors help me deal with stress much better. Cox and Steiner, identified stress as “A disturbance of homeostasis”, which is also related to conditions in the body (Cox &Steiner, 2013). This was life changing for me because prior to going through my experience and reading this book, I always thought that stress was normal and I was to just keep moving and doing life. Now I feel differently about how I deal with stress. Cox and Steiner listed type of coping with stress, one being problem -focused coping, which is devoted to changing the circumstances that trigger stress, and emotion-focused coping which is needed and involves managing our

emotional responses to the stressors by obtaining support or engaging in distracting activities (Cox & Steiner, 2013). I learned to do what the situation calls for in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed and stressed out and this small practice has had a significant impact on my mental health and stability. It has also minimized my anxiety as well.

I have learned to be intentional about my self-care both personally and professionally by first by creating a balance between work, play, and rest activities so as to enhance a sense of personal integration (Cox & Steiner, 2013). Also, being open to talk when things are becoming stressful. Not taking on too much has also been a goal too. Understanding the space, I am in allows me to take the necessary steps to minimize stress and burnout. Personally, I always take time for myself just to digress from the day's events. I often sit and do nothing in those moments. Meditation helps also and pampering doesn't hurt either. The biggest thing I learned during my personal self-care journey is that it is necessary. As I mentioned, I thought I was supposed to shake off the stress and keep moving to the next task at hand and do it all over again in the morning. But not anymore, taking care of myself is of most importance and that started with being able to acknowledge that I wasn't okay and that it's okay not to be okay. This happened spiritually as well. Allowing myself to admit there are some broken places that needed acknowledging and mending, and being okay with that too allowed me the opportunity to truly deal and heal in these spaces.

Rule of Life

Creating a rule of life opened up something in me that God was already working on, particularly in the area of role and primary relationships. The readings helped me to explore deeply and reevaluate the positions different ones occupied in my life and forced me to reposition some and eliminate others and mend those that needed mending. The reading also

caused me to look deeper into my talents, how God used them, my gifts, what were they, my purpose, vision, and mission, do I really know what they are? These things I often thought about but thought I had time to explore or maybe didn't think God revealed them to me yet. But during this class I realized they were all there and God had already been cultivating them in me. Preparing me to walk in them through my experiences and through my journey through school and learning in ministry. It was all coming together. I am now praying concerning these things and incorporating them into my daily life even more both personally and professionally.

Cox, K., & Steiner, S. (2013). *Self-care in Social Work: A guide for practitioners, supervisors, and administrators*. NASW Press.

Macchia, S. A. (2012). *Crafting a rule of Life: An invitation to the well-ordered way*. IVP Books.